(c) With a view to reduce post harvest losses of fruits and vegetables, Government have taken several measures, such as:—

(i) The National Horticulture Board has been provided Rs. 200 crores during VIII Plan period for establishment of post harvest infrastructure like pre-cooling, ultra high humidity storages, grading packing centres, improved and refrigerated transportation and processing through integrated project on management of post harvest infrastructure of horticulture crops and development of marketing of horticulture produce through participation in soft loan schemes. Similar assistance is provided by National Cooperative Development Corporation to the Cooperatives.

(ii) In order to encourage larger processing of fruits and vegetables, the Govt. have removed excise duty on all fruits and vegetables, allowed automatic approval for technology and marketing arrangements with foreign companies on payment of technology fee upto Rs. 1 crore and royalty of 5% for domestic sale and for export upto 8%

(iii) Reduced excise duties and customs duties on capital goods for fruits and vegetables processing industry, as well as refrigeration and other equipments.

(iv) Provided encouragement to export by making the export earning tax free for a period of five years, allowed 100% Export Oriented Units for agro food industries to sell upto 50% in Domestic Tariff Area, allowed duty concessions under Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme, allowed import of capital goods for fruits and vegetable processing industry. Besides Ministry of Food Processing Industry formulated various Plan schemes for encouraging fruits and vegetables processing industry.

Yield of Foodgrains and Cash Crops in North-Eastern Region

5634. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the performance of North-Eastern Region so far as yield of foodgrains and cash crops is concerned; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to increase the yield of foodgrains and cash crops in this region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Paddy is the major foodgrain crop of the North-Eastern region. The rate of growth of yield of paddy during the period 1980-81 to 1993-94 has been significantly high in most of the States except Arunachal Pradesh where it was low and Meghalaya which has shown a decline in yield in recent period.

The performance of cash crops in respect of yield is satisfactory.

(b) For increasing production and productivity of cereal crops in North-Eastern region, a centrally sponsored Integrated Cereal Development Programme in Rice Based cropping system areas (ICDP-Rice) is being continued. For commercial crops Special Jute Development Programme is being implemented. A scheme for Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System is being proposed during the remaining part of the 8th Five Year Plan.

National Agricultural Technology Project

5635. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning

a Natinal Agricultural Technology Project with assistance from World Bank;

(b) if so, the details of this project; and

(c) the schedule of its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Department of Agriculture, Govt. of India are jointly preparing a National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) with World Bank assistance to:

— stgrenthen national capacity in research and extension management, policy planning, priority setting, monitoring and evaluation to meet current and emerging needs of agricultural development;

— strengthen and/or establish infrastructural and institutional supports to ensure adequate facilities for undertaking desired research and technology development activities;

— foster linkage mechanisms (i) between research, extension and client groups, (ii) between technology and development oriented departments, programme, institutions (including NGOs), (iii) between public and private sector initiatives in technology generation, assessment, refinement and transfer, and (iv) to introduce innovative means to share research and extension costs and responsibilities;

— maximize nation's capacity to effectively benefit from biotechnology and advances in other agro-biological sciences in a global context and develop first-rate international retrieval and dissemination mechanisms and systems;

— develop human resource, particularly in the frontier areas of science and technology, management skill and technology assessment; and

— formulate and initiate research and technology development based on programme and matrix approach in priority areas using systems concept so that the over all efficiency of the NARS is improved.

(c) The NATP concept paper has been accepted by the World Bank. Based on the concept, project documents are being formulated. The project is expected to be launched by June, 1996.

Destruction of Virus Infected Shimps in Andhra Pradesh

5636. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Rs. 300 crores worth virus infected shrimps from aquafarms in Andhra Pradesh was destroyed in 1994-95;

(b) if so, whether any assistance will be given to smaller units to offset such losses; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) There has been some loss of shrimp production due to disease in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh during 1994-95, the value of which is reported to be over Rs.70 crores.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

Reorientation of Agricultural Education System

5637. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an urgent need to reorient Agricultural Education System in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government have